

State in the fens of Holland and Zealand. Nevertheless, this fugitive, whom rumour pronounced to be dead, had not lost faith in his mission. He had, too, an irrefragable trust in Providence, and adversity only strengthened it. Religious conviction took a stronger grip of him. It was not, indeed, the conviction of the narrow partisan such as this contentious age produced on the Papist and Protestant side alike. By this time he had definitely seceded from the Catholic Church, which the cruelties of Alva discredited far more than the denunciations of a Luther or a Calvin, and had returned to the Lutheran creed in which he had been baptised. Lutheranism was but a transition to Calvinism, to whose dogmatic and democratic tendencies he had long been hostile. He became a Calvinist, as Henry IV. afterwards became a Catholic, by force of circumstances rather than by what is called conversion. Like Henry, too, he did not, in changing his religion, become a bigot. His striking characteristic was his trust in God rather than his belief in any formal system of doctrines. In this respect his faith was as unshakable as that of Calvin himself, if he made little account of sectarian differences of opinion, and was as averse to Protestant as to Papist persecution. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his profession of the creed of Calvin. It is impossible to regard the man who clung so firmly and so persistently to his faith in God as a habitual hypocrite. The note of sincerity in such professions is unmistakable, especially as they were made in circumstances of trial that tested the character of the man to its very depths. Yet, while sincerely religious, he was a patriot first, a Calvinist second.

Moreover, this trust in Providence (and herein lies the historic importance of his creed) quickened the energy and resource which he brought to bear on what he came to regard as the cause of God as well as the cause of his country. It sustained the genius of the man who, without being a great soldier, was a born leader of men. His genius was that of the statesman, not of the general. He was a consummate politician. He could fight his enemies with their own weapons, beat them at their own game. He was more than a match for Philip himself in the diplomatic sleight-of-hand that constituted the statecraft of the age. He knew the contents of the